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Westermann has shown[1] that the Voltaic tribes all speak languages belonging to the *Gur* group of Sudanic languages. The Mossi (or, more accurately, the Mole-Dagbane speaking) group all speak Mole-Dagbane dialects, which form a distinct branch of the *Gur* family. The people of Taleland speak a Dagbane dialect. From Zuarungu northwards Mole influence is linguistically predominant.

The cultural uniformity of the Voltaic region is equally strikingly shown in forms of social and economic organization, in custom, belief, and material culture. Though local variations are great and have important sociological implications, as we shall find, the common patterns and contents are obvious.[2]

Among the Voltaic peoples, the Mossi, the Dagomba, and the Mamprusi have centralized forms of political organization of the type common throughout West Africa. The aristocracies of the three nations claim to be kinsfolk descended from conquering immigrants who established themselves first in the country of the Mamprusi and spread northwards and southwards from there. The three paramount chiefs still maintain ceremonial ties accounted for by quasi-mythical traditions of kinship and migration well known in all three countries.

Between these centralized states stretches a block of tribes which seem to have no political unity. Each so-called tribe appears to be independent of and sporadically at enmity with its neighbours, and there is no overriding central authority. Nor does the tribe seem to have any internal political unity.

We owe to Rattray the discovery that these central Voltaic tribes comprise two major groups of communities. On the one side are those that claim to be the descendants of immigrants from parts of the country other than their present habitats. On the other side are communities that claim to be the autochthonous inhabitants. The two groups are found in every tribe, including the Mossi, Mamprusi, and Dagomba, living side by side and indistinguishable from one another by broad cultural or linguistic criteria. Many of the immigrant communities claim descent from forbears of the Mampuru ruling stock. Though now wholly amalgamated with the alleged aboriginal inhabitants, they have certain ritual observances and a system of chiefship similar to those of the Mamprusi. In fact the Paramount Chief of Mampurugu appoints many of their chiefs. But this is symbolical of kinship and ideological ties, not of political suzerainty. For though these communities may be regarded as the distant outliers of the Mampuru social and political structure, they are politically independent of the Mamprusi.

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[1] Westermann, D., *Die westlichen Sudansprachen und ihre Beziehungen zum Bantu*, pp. 121 ff.; and in Rattray, R. S., *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, chap. iv.

[2] The literature on this area is scanty and of very unequal value. The following are the most informative ethnographical monographs, in order of reliability: Rattray, op. cit.; Delafosse, op. cit.; Labouret, H., *Les Tribus de Rameau Lobi*, Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Paris, 1931; Tauxier, L., *Les Noirs du Soudan*, Paris, 1912; id., *Les Noirs du Yatenga*, Paris, 1917; Dim Delobsom, A. A., *L'Empire du Mogho-Naba*, Institut de Droit Comparé, Études de Sociologie et d'Ethnologie juridiques, Paris, 1932; Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, London, 1925.

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